

July 13, 2023

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We are writing to express our strong support for your efforts to protect the Greater Chaco region. This vast and culturally significant landscape spanning northwestern New Mexico, northeastern Arizona, southeastern Utah, and southwestern Colorado holds immense importance not only for the present generation but also for future generations to come.

As a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to safeguarding the Greater Chaco region, we have long advocated for the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management to take decisive action against unchecked fossil fuel development. The impact of oil and gas drilling, fracking, pipelines, processing facilities, and mining on the region's public lands, clean air and water, and community health cannot be ignored. Over the years, millions of voices have joined together, calling on you and other leaders to put an end to the costly and unsustainable industrial exploitation that jeopardizes this precious landscape. Federal courts have even ruled that the current levels of exploitation are unjustified and unlawful. The overwhelming support for safeguarding Greater Chaco has remained steadfast and resolute.

We commend President Biden for launching the Honoring Chaco Initiative in 2021, which offers immense promise in delivering the necessary protections and paving the way for preserving this invaluable cultural landscape.

Today, we urge you to recommit yourself to the protection of Greater Chaco, its communities, and the pursuit of a just and equitable transition. The Honoring Chaco Initiative provides an opportunity to establish a new paradigm for the management of public lands and resources in this region, one that prioritizes principles of health, justice, equity, and sustainability.

While we appreciate the steps that have been taken to protect certain areas of Greater Chaco from industrial exploitation, we recognize that more needs to be done beyond mere buffer zones and lines on maps to truly safeguard the safety and well-being of this cultural landscape.

Looking ahead, we call on you to ensure the Honoring Chaco Initiative continues to progress and advance the following core goals:

- Wind down and phase out fossil fuel exploitation in Greater Chaco.
- Develop and implement Tribal co-management strategies for the region's public lands and resources.
- Fully protect and restore the air quality, ground and surface waters, and healthy lands of the region.
- Allocate resources to enable communities to achieve economic security and sustainability.

Now is the time to redouble our efforts in support of the Honoring Chaco Initiative. With the momentum built over the years in the fight to safeguard Greater Chaco, we must take decisive

action to guide a just and equitable transition away from exploitation for this cherished landscape and its communities.

The future of Greater Chaco lies in our collective hands, and we deeply appreciate and value your leadership in this crucial endeavor. We would also like to address the unacceptable attacks directed personally at you, Secretary Haaland. We strongly condemn such behavior and reaffirm our unwavering support for your dedication and commitment to fostering the first-of-its-kind Honoring Chaco Initiative.

The Greater Chaco Coalition (Frack Off Chaco) stands united as a collaborative effort between Indigenous community leaders, Native organizations, nonprofits, and public lands and water protectors. Guided by the Jemez principles, the Coalition works together to advance the following platform:

- An end to sacrifice zones and further oil and gas extraction across the Greater Chaco region.
- Meaningful Tribal and community consultation and consent at every stage of decision-making.
- Consideration of cumulative impacts and the health and holistic wellness of impacted communities.
- Advancement of environmental justice and just transitions for the Greater Chaco region beyond extraction.

The overwhelming support for this platform over the past decade and through three administrations highlights the depth and breadth of commitment to advancing these principles. Notable instances of support include:

- **2013:** Eastern Navajo Agency Council resolution calling for a moratorium on horizontal fracking.
- **2015:** Resolutions from Torreon Chapter, Counselor Chapter, and Ojo Encino Chapter on Navajo Nation calling for a moratorium on horizontal fracking.
- **2015 - Present:** The Greater Chaco Coalition's protests against federal oil and gas lease sales in New Mexico, including the Greater Chaco Landscape and the Permian Basin, resulting in over 2 million individual protest comments submitted.
- **2016:** Publication of an amended notice of intent that includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as a co-leading agency with the BLM in the Farmington Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) process, marking the first collaboration of its kind between the agencies. Impacted community members provide over 1,000 in-person comments during the RMPA public scoping process.
- **2017:** Joint statement from the All Pueblo Council of Governors and Navajo Nation President and Vice President opposing horizontal fracking in the Greater Chaco region.
- **2017:** Passage of a resolution by the National Congress of American Indians to support a moratorium on leasing and permitting in the Greater Chaco region.
- **2017:** Passage of House Memorial 70 to protect the Greater Chaco Canyon Landscape by the New Mexico Legislature.
- **2018:** Rally with over 200 advocates at the BLM New Mexico State Office protesting the oil and gas lease sale, including 44,000 acres in the Greater Chaco region and 40,000 acres near Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke deferred the parcels in the Greater Chaco region to further analyze over 5,000 cultural sites within the leasing area.

- **2019:** Delivery of over 33,000 protests by the Greater Chaco Coalition opposing a BLM oil and gas lease sale in Greater Chaco and Greater Carlsbad regions.
- **2022:** BLM and BIA host a series of public Q&A sessions and a 90-day comment period on the proposed administrative mineral withdrawal. Members of the Greater Chaco Coalition delivered nearly 80,000 comments to the BLM New Mexico State Office, urging broader landscape-level protections beyond a 10-mile buffer and calling for the agencies to 'Truly Honor Chaco'. In response to widespread criticism of the public engagement process and a request from the leadership at the All Pueblo Council of Governors, the BLM and BIA held additional public meetings, changed the format to allow for public comment, and extended the comment deadline by an additional 30 days.
- **2023:** Diné CARE, et al. v. Bureau of Land Mgmt., et al. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit rejected nearly 200 Trump-era approved drilling permits defended by the Biden administration in favor of conservation groups. The ruling found that the agency violated NEPA by failing to account for the health impacts of toxic air pollution from oil and gas activities and the carbon pollution impacts to the climate. This marks the first time the 10th Circuit has ruled in favor of citizen groups on these issues, resulting in a halt to new drilling permits.

Given this resounding support and the significant milestones achieved over the years, we urge you to continue championing the cause of Greater Chaco. The Honoring Chaco Initiative represents a beacon of hope for the preservation and protection of this cherished landscape.

Thank you for your tireless dedication to safeguarding Greater Chaco, promoting justice and equity, and ensuring a sustainable future for all. We stand ready to support your efforts and work collaboratively to honor the legacy of this extraordinary cultural landscape.

Sincerely,

Greater Chaco Coalition Coordinating Group Members:

Samuel Sage, Community Services Coordinator
Counselor Chapter of Navajo Nation

Julia Bernal, Executive Director
Pueblo Action Alliance

Lauren Howland, Representative
Diné Allottees Against eXploitation (DAAX)

Mike Eisenfeld, Energy and Climate Program Manager
San Juan Citizens Alliance

Cheyenne Antonio, Greater Chaco Coordinator
Diné Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment (Diné C.A.R.E.)

Miya King-Flaherty, Organizing Representative
Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter

Silas Grant, New Mexico Campaigner
Center for Biological Diversity

Rose Rushing, Attorney
Western Environmental Law Center

Kendra Pinto, Four Corners Indigenous Community Field Advocate
Earthworks

Rebecca Sobel, Organizing Director
WildEarth Guardians

Coalition Members and Supporting Organizations:

Susan Penner, Co-Chair Legislative Working Group
1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations

Rachael Lehman, Chair, Healthy Communities
I-70 Citizens Advisory Group

Crystal Cavalier, Founder
7 Directions of Service

JL Andrepont, Senior Policy Analyst
350.org

Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder
350 Hawaii

Jim Mackenzi, Co-Director
350 New Mexico

Sandra Adams, Executive Director
350 Pensacola

Karen Bueno, Leaders Team Member, ANCA
Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action

Nicole Cantello, President
AFGE Local 704

Joseph Zuppon, Executive Director
Amigos Bravos

Sarah Stewart, President
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.

Ted Glick, Organizer
Beyond Extreme Energy

Fran Ludwig, Co-Chair
Boston Catholic Climate Movement

Beata Tsosie and Belin Marcus, Co-Directors
Breath of My Heart Birthplace

Marie Venner, Co-Chair
Businesses for a Livable Climate

Jane Williams, Executive Director
California in Communities Against Toxics

Robina Suwol, Executive Director
California Safe Schools

Marie Venner & Stef Klass, Co-Chairs
Call to Action Colorado

Jennifer Wexler, President
Canton for a Sustainable Equitable Future

Stefanie Klass & Marie Venner, Co-Chair, Founder
Catholic Network US

Isaac De Luna Navarro, Communications Director
Center for Civic Policy

Anson Wright, Coordinator
Chaco Alliance

Marie Venner & Jim Smith, Co-Chairs
Colorado Businesses for a Livable Climate

Elaine Cimino, Director
Common Ground Rising

Fred Kirsch, Director
Community for Sustainable Energy

Hazel James, Coordinator
Diné Center for Research & Evaluation

Mary Gutierrez, Director
Earth Ethics, Inc.

Tara Thornton, Deputy Director
Endangered Species Coalition

Leah Redwood, Action Coordinator
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area

Elizabeth Schuster, Government Affairs
Representative
Food & Water Watch

Jenni Siri, Coordinator
Frack Free Four Corners

Shannon Smith, Executive Director
FracTracker Alliance

Louise Lears, Creation Care Advocacy
Franciscan Action Network

Raena Garcia, Senior Fossil Fuels and Lands
Campaigner
Friends of the Earth US

Gita McCutcheon, Proprietor
Gita Group

Shelley Silbert, Executive Director
Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Nichelle Taylor, Program Director for Policy
Development and Implementation
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance

Sara Shor, Organizing and Campaigns Director
GreenFaith

Ángel Peña, Public Lands
GreenLatinos

Harmony Cummings, Co-Founder
The Green House Connection Center

Cheryl Barnds, Coalition Coordinator
Honor the Earth

Tom BK Goldtooth, Executive Director
Indigenous Environmental Network

Philip Beck, Co-Founder
Indivisible Ambassadors

Indivisible Ventura

August Allen, Executive Director
In the Shadow Of The Wolf

Petuuche Gilbert, Vice-President
**Laguna Acoma Coalition for a Safe
Environment**

Doug Henderson and Ed Behan,
Representatives
**Larimer Alliance for Health, Safety and
Environment**

Patrick Santana, Chair
Littleton Business Alliance

Debbie Thornburg James, Board
**Mayfair Park Neighborhood Association
Board**

Amy Petré Hill, Founder/Community Chaplain
Mental Health & Inclusion Ministries

Lauren Swain, Executive Director and Founder
The Mind's Eye

Emmett Hogley, Co-Chair
**Montbello Neighborhood Improvement
Association**

Jamie Valdez, Organizing Lead
Mothers Out Front Colorado

Mitch Buszek, Director
MoveOn New Mexico

Susan Gordon, Coordinator
Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment

Carol Davis, Managing Director
Native Organizers Alliance

James Povijua, Regional Director
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

Janene Yazzie, Southwest Regional Director
NDN Collective

Mariel Nanasi, Executive Director
New Energy Economy

Anni Hanna, Director
New Mexico Climate Justice

Virginia Necochea, Executive Director
New Mexico Environmental Law Center

Delese Dellios, President
Niko Dellios Legacy Fund

Jerry Rivers, Representative
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)

Cari Gardner, Director
NYPAN Greene

Sally Jane Gellert, Member
Occupy Bergen County (New Jersey)

Leah Redwood, Climate Justice Organizer
Oil and Gas Action Network

Allie Rosenbluth, U.S. Program Co-Manager
Oil Change International

Kyle Crider, Program and Policy Director
The People's Justice Council

Wendy Volkmann, Co-Chair
PNM Shareholders for a Responsible Future

John Beard, Jr., CEO
Port Arthur Community Action Network (PACAN)

Annie Baker, Digital Director
Progressives for Climate

Russell Chisholm, Managing Director
Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights

Ruth Kastner, Director
The Quantum Institute

Ruth Breech, Senior Campaigner
Rainforest Action Network

Marie Venner, Chair/Founder
RapidShift Network

William Clarrk, President
Rio Arriba Concerned Citizens

Daniel Timmons, Rio Grande Waterkeeper
Rio Grande Waterkeeper

Sally Roberts, Chair
Rise Up WV

Jeff Hart, Co-Founder
Save EPA (former employees)

Grace Nichols, Science Coordinator
Save the Pine Bush

Emma Coopersmith, Co-Leader
Seattle Academy Climate Empowerment Club

Bradley Williams, Associate Director of Advocacy
Sierra Club

Marie Venner, Chair/Staff
Small Business Alliance

Martha Camacho Rodriguez, Director
Social Ecological Education-LA (SEE)

Mazeda Uddin, CEO
South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc

Terry Sloan, Director
Southwest Native Cultures

Anna Ramirez, Staff
Southwest Organization for Sustainability

Siqiniq Maupin, Director
Sovereign Inupiat For A Living Arctic

Shannon Francis, Executive Director
Spirit of the Sun, Inc.

Margaret Rossoff, Co-Coordinator
Sunflower Alliance

Trupti Suthar, Representative
Sunnyside United Neighbors, Inc (SUNI)

Maura Stephens, Coordinating Committee
Member
System Change Not Climate Change

Timothy Edward Duda, Interim Director
Terra Advocati

Fran Aguirre, Acting President
Unite North Metro Denver

Paddy McClelland, Co-Founder
Wall of Women

Mark LeClaire, Organizer
We Are One River

Chris Calwell, Co-Chair
**Western Slope Businesses for a Livable
Climate**

Renée M. Chacon, Executive
Director/Co-Founder
Womxn from the Mountain

Anna Ramirez, Staff
Working for Racial Equity

Seneca Johnson, Campaign Organizer
**YUCCA Youth United for Climate Crisis
Action**

Aaditi Lele, Policy Director
Zero Hour

CC: Tracy Stone-Manning, Nada Culver, Shantha Ready-Alonso, Senator Heinrich, Senator Lujan, Rep. Leger Fernandez, Rep Standbury, Rep Vasquez, Rep Grijalva